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Joe Courtney

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June 14, 2012

The Honorable Hilda Solis  
Secretary of Labor  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Frances Perkins Building  
200 Constitution Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Secretary Solis:

I write to you today to request favorable consideration for Trade Adjustment Assistance for employees of Amerbelle Textiles in Vernon, Connecticut filed June 14, 2012.

As a resident of Vernon, its former state representative from 1987 to 1993, and its town attorney from 2003 to 2005, I have had a working relationship with Amerbelle's management and workforce for the past 25 years. Amerbelle is located on one of the oldest manufacturing sites in American history. News of its closure is a sad milestone for the local community and reflective of the challenge facing our domestic textile sector. Amerbelle's application for TAA is exactly aligned with the intent and letter of the TAA law, which I strongly supported in its reauthorization in the 112th Congress.

Make no mistake about it: Amerbelle's decision to close its doors and permanently terminate its workforce is the direct result of international competition that has undercut the firm's ability to compete on a level playing field. Its employees have loyally continued to work during this intense time of stress and have performed with the highest level of productivity and quality over the years. Their futures should be protected by the safeguards and support of the TAA program.

It is my understanding that there may be questions regarding the exact timing of the adverse impact caused by foreign competition. As I can personally attest, Amerbelle has been battling foreign competition for the past 25 years and the Town of Vernon and the State of Connecticut have worked with its owners to extend its existence in the face of a relentless onslaught of cheap imports from countries without strong labor and environmental standards. The fact that Amerbelle even existed as a textile producer in New England in 2012 is remarkable and a testament to the decades long management-labor cooperation, as well as strong support from the Vernon community. Considering all of these facts, it is my hope that Amerbelle's eligibility for TAA assistance will be judged not just in terms of near term impacts but by the steady and ultimately insurmountable adverse impact of overseas competition.

As always, I thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if I can be of further assistance to you during your review of this application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Courtney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "C".

JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress